



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 13, 2020

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of an Allocation of City Funds to the ACTNow COVID-19 Response Fund and for an ALIVE Food Bank Bulk Food Purchase.

ISSUE: Consideration of providing \$100,000 in City funds to match funds raised by the ACTNow COVID-19 Response Fund, and \$20,000 for a bulk food purchase.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council:

1. Authorize the allocation of \$100,000 of City matching funds to the ACTNow COVID-19 Response Fund;
2. Authorize the allocation of \$20,000 to ALIVE to purchase bulk food equivalent to 17,000 meals;
and
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents required.

BACKGROUND: The City and ACT for Alexandria (ACT) recognize that COVID-19 and the necessary public health measures to address how this virus will affect our community, particularly those most vulnerable who rely on our safety net services. In the weeks and months ahead there will be major disruptions in the normal operations of everyone in our community. ACT has stood up the ACTNow Fund to solicit donations from the community with a goal of matching \$100,000. It is proposed that the City add to this effort by allocating \$100,000 to increase the Fund goal to \$200,000 and increase the amount of resources available for local needs.

In response to the federal shutdown of late 2018 and early 2019, the City and ACT partnered to create the ACTNow Fund so that area non-profits could nimbly apply and receive grants to support the increased needs of

workers and their families who were impacted by the lack of work and were suffering various, food, housing, medical and other financial hardships. At that time the City and ACT contributed \$25,000 each for a total of \$50,000. During that event more than \$57,000 was distributed to eight organizations and more than 200 people were served.

With the uncertainty around COVID-19, with schools closed, and the length of time our community will be disrupted, staff anticipate that there will be an even greater financial need for resources. As time goes on, the hardships on individuals and families will intensify. Many already on the financial edge may be pushed into crisis. The demand for emergency health services, food, rent, utility, child care and mental health services is anticipated. This is when we will need our non-profit service providers the most. Alexandria's non-profit organizations are the fabric of our social safety net and essential partners during this public health crisis. As non-profits respond, they will become financially vulnerable themselves as they seek to cover the cost of expanding services and providing services that may still be unforeseen.

The ACTNow Fund will allow non-profit organizations to do a short application articulating any present or imminent financial need to augment and/or support program delivery. The grant opportunities will be fluid and continuous throughout the event as long as there is money available. Members of the community have expressed interest in ways to donate during this public health crisis. In fact, donations have already started to come into the Fund. This proposal will leverage private giving, City government match and non-profit community organization capabilities. City staff and ACT believe that this partnership will show the community solidarity and encourage even more people to donate funds.

Additionally, it is proposed that \$20,000 be provided to ALIVE so they can make a bulk food purchase equivalent to 17,000 meals. Food banks in Alexandria are a mainstay of the City's support network for our low-income population, and ALIVE has the opportunity to make a bulk food purchase equivalent to 17,000 meals to replenish and build up their food inventory.

FISCAL IMPACT: It is proposed that the City allocate \$100,000 to the ACTNow Fund and \$20,000 for the ALIVE bulk food purchase. The \$120,000 would be allocated from funds remaining in the FY 2020 City Snow Removal Account.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

STAFF:

Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager